(b) if so, whether serious concerns have been expressed by the Supreme Court in which it has been pointed out that nearly two crore cases are pending in the country's Subordinate Courts on account of shortage of judges;

(c) whether both Central Government and States have been asked to implement this directive and appoint more judges both in Central Government and States to cope up this rush; and

(d) if so, the steps being considered by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY): (a) Yes, Madam. The Supreme Court, *vide* its judgement dated 21.3.2002, in All India Judges' Association and Others *Vs.* Union of India & Others, has directed that the existing vacancies in the Subordinate Courts at all levels should be filled, if possible latest by 31st March, 2003, in all the States. The Hon'ble Court has also directed that an increase in the judge strength from the existing ratio of 10.5 or 13 per 10 lakh people to 50 judges per 10 lakh people should be effected and implemented within a period of five years.

(b) The Supreme Court have expressed concern over the pendency of cases in Subordinate Courts on account of inadequate number of Judges.

(c) Yes, Madam.

(d) The Supreme Court's judgment of 21st March, 2002, *inter-alia*, contains time limits for compliance of directions by the Central Government for the Union Territories and the respective State Government/High Courts for the States. The Apex Court has further directed that the States as well as the Union of India shall submit their compliance report by the 30th September, 2002. Central Government have addressed the State Governments for taking necessary steps towards the compliance of the directives. As regards directives to be complied by the Central Government, necessary action has been initiated.

Financial assistance for computerisation of lower courts

4893. SHRIMATI S. G. INDIRA: Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any scheme has been formulated to provide financial assistance to State Governments for computerisation of lower courts;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The Central Government has initiated a pilot project for Computerisation and networking of Courts in the four metropolises of Delhi, Chennai, Kolkata and Mumbai at a cost of Rs. 14.91 crores, on the basis of estimates prepared by the National Informatics Centre. These courts will serve as models of computerised courts for the District Courts in the country.

Out of the amount of Rs. 8.53 crore allotted during 2001-02, Rs. 4.98 crore has been released for the computerisation project of District Courts in Delhi. The remaining amount of Rs. 3.55 crore has been released to the three metropolitan cities of Chennai (Rs. 0.82 crore), Kolkata (Rs. 1.17 crore) and Mumbai (Rs. 1.56 crore) respectively.

The amount of Rs. 6.40 crore earmarked for the project in the year 2002-03 will be released under the project in the three metropolitan cities of Chennai, Kolkata and Mumbai after reviewing the progress by the Project Steering Committee and on receipt of due utilization certificates from the concerned State Government.

Disposal of pending cases

4894. SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA: Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether keeping in view nearly two crore pending cases in the subordinate courts, the Supreme Court has asked the States to undertake large scale appointments of Judges before March, 31, 2002;

(b) whether the apex court has suggested to have 50 Judges for 10 lakh population;

(c) if so, Government's plan in this regard; and

(d) whether Government will lay down an action plan to see that pending cases are disposed of as early as possible?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Supreme Court, *vide* its judgment dated 21.3.2002, in All India Judges' Association & Others *Vs.* Union of India & Others, has directed that the existing vacancies in the Subordinate Courts at all levels should be filled, if possible latest by 31st March, 2003, in all the States. The Hon'ble Court has also directed that an increase in the judge strength from